

Application no. 10/069,020
Attorney docket no. 031780-0290586
Page 6

REMARKS

I. Status of the claims

Claims 22-37 are pending. Claims 1-21 have been or remain cancelled; claims 22-27 remain withdrawn; and new claims 28-37 have been submitted. New claims 28-37 correspond with previously withdrawn process claims 11, 12, and 14-21. In this response, which has been filed in conjunction with an RCE, product claims 1-10 have been cancelled without prejudice to pursue process claims originally recited in claims 11, 12, and 14-21. The set of claims currently being pursued falls within the group of claims (Group II) restricted by the examiner in the Restriction Requirement mailed September 23, 2003. Since pursuit of this group of claims would be appropriate in a divisional application, pursuit of this group of claims should likewise be appropriate in this application, especially since product claims 1-10 have been cancelled and claims 22-27 remain withdrawn. Thus, in this application, Applicants are continuing pursuit of a single invention, as previously defined by the examiner.

The only substantive difference between claim 28 and previously pending claim 11 lies the recitation of component (A) as being different than component (B). No new matter has been introduced through these amendments and new claims.

II. Obviousness-type Double Patenting

The examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, and 4-8 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,787,581 to Blum et al. ("Blum '581"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The claimed invention relates to a process for the melt impregnation or melt coating of components, absorbent materials, or primed and unprimed substrates, comprising the steps: (i) melting a hot-melt resin; (ii) applying the resultant resin melt onto and into the components, absorbent materials or primed or unprimed substrates; and (iii) curing the applied resin melt by heat and/or actinic radiation.

In contrast, Blum '581 *first* applies the powder coating material to the substrate and then, *subsequently*, melts the powder coating material on the substrate by application of heat. See claim 12 of Blum '581. This is the exact reverse order of how Applicants' claimed invention carries out these steps. Applicants' claimed method of melting first and applying second allows

30533592v2

Application no. 10/069,020

Attorney docket no. 031780-0290586

Page 7

the resin to be applied in a molten state, and moreover, provides the molten resin with the ability to flow into the cavities and/or around bends of the components, absorbent materials or primed or unprimed substrates. If these method steps were reversed, as set forth in the claims of Blum '581, then Applicants process would not be able to apply the molten resin onto and into the components, absorbent materials or primed or unprimed substrates, as claimed by Applicants.

Since the claimed invention of Blum '581 does not teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention but instead teaches the reverse order of the process, the claims of Blum '581 do not render Applicants' claimed invention obvious. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the examiner withdraw this obviousness-type double patenting rejection.

III. Rejection of claims 1, 2, and 4-8 over Blum

The examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, and 4-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over PCT Application No. WO 97/25361 or its U.S. equivalent, U.S. Patent No. 6,133,337, to Blum et al. ("Blum '337"). The examiner bases this rejection on the premise that Applicants' components (A) and (B) may be the same. The examiner elaborates on this point later, stating that since component (A) of Applicants' claims may also contain terminal and/or pendant isoprenyl groups, the difference between components (A) and (B) is not apparent.

In this response, Applicants have recited in claim 28—the only pending independent claim—that component (A) is different than component (B). This recitation makes clear that components (A) and (B) may not be the same and effectively rebuts the premise that this rejection was based upon. As stipulated to by the examiner, Blum '337 does not teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention where component (A) is different than component (B).

The limitations previously introduced in the composition claims have been introduced into the pending process claims. Thus, the points of distinction previously made of record as to Blum '337 with regard to the product claims are equally applicable to the pending process claims.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

30533592v2

Application no. 10/069,020
Attorney docket no. 031780-0290586
Page 8

IV. Conclusion

Applicants request reconsideration of this application in view of the amendments and remarks set forth above. For any unresolved issues, the examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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